

October 2025



SAINT CATHERINE CENTER FOR *Special Needs*

Celebrating a Night of Joy & Gratitude Annual Gala 2025

On Sunday, October 5th, the Saint Catherine Center community came together for an unforgettable evening at our annual Joy and Gratitude Gala, held at The Water's Edge at Giovanni's in Darien. With more than 300 guests in attendance, the room was filled with warmth, generosity, and a shared belief in our mission—proof that our hearts truly are in your hands.

This year, we were proud to honor two extraordinary individuals whose commitment shapes the heart of our Center. Joseph B. Sindelar Jr. received the Leadership Award in recognition of his dedicated service on our Board and his steadfast guidance. Carrie Sindelar was presented with the Volunteer Service Award for her many efforts and compassionate involvement in countless ways. Together, their example reminds us that leadership and service often go hand in hand.

“Both Joe and Carrie have given so much of themselves to our mission,” said Laura Grozier. “They each give selflessly, lead humbly, and inspire others to do the same. Although we honor them individually, together they are a formidable team who truly live their faith.”

The energy in the room soared during the live auction, led by Terry O'Connor, whose enthusiasm inspired lively bidding and generous giving. Thanks to the remarkable spirit of our guests, the evening raised essential funds that will directly support our programs and individuals at Saint Catherine Center.

To our sponsors, attendees, donors, and volunteers—thank you. Because of you, we continue to grow, to serve, and to empower every individual to reach their highest potential. Your generosity sustains our mission and fills our work with purpose and hope.



As we look back on this year's Gala, we do so with deep gratitude. Our hearts are in your hands—and because of you, they continue to grow.

[View photos of the evening](#)



Welcome Erin Bassett Adult Program Director



We are delighted to welcome Erin Bassett as the new Adult Program Director at Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs. Erin brings more than a decade of experience in education and human services, dedicating her career to supporting individuals with disabilities in meaningful and life-enriching ways.

Her background includes serving as a Residential Manager at Sunrise, where she oversaw group home operations, and as an Operations and Case Coordinator at Easter

Seals, supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. Erin has also worked as an Employment Specialist, helping students develop transferable vocational skills, and as a teacher for children with autism.

Since 2013, she has been committed to empowering people with disabilities to achieve their goals and thrive in their communities. At Saint Catherine Center, Erin's depth of skills and experience will guide her leadership of the Adult Day Program, where she will partner with staff, families, and adult participants to create opportunities for growth, independence, and community engagement.

Erin was born and raised in Bethel, CT. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband Matthew and their four children: Colby, Kylie, Jackson, and Margo. She is excited to

become part of the Saint Catherine community and looks forward to getting to know our families and young adults in the months ahead. "I believe in the power of teamwork, kindness, and respect to lift others up, and I bring enthusiasm and compassion to help people reach their full potential," says Erin.

Please join us in giving Erin a warm welcome to the Saint Catherine Center team.

Fairfield Celebrates Down Syndrome



On Saturday, October 4th, students and staff from Saint Catherine Academy joined together at Roger Sherman Elementary School for the first Fairfield Celebrates Down Syndrome event, hosted by Anousha's Helping Hand, a new nonprofit dedicated to spreading awareness and inclusion.

The fair, held in honor of Down Syndrome Awareness Month, brought families and friends together for a joyful afternoon filled with games, vendors, and raffles. Our Academy was proud to be part of the celebration—students and staff set up an informational table to showcase our school and share how we support individuals with special needs through education, life skills, and community engagement.

It was a wonderful day of connection and community spirit, highlighting the message of inclusion and the importance of celebrating every individual's unique abilities.



Eileen Blees Receives St. Augustine Medal of Service

On September 27, Eileen Blees was honored with the Saint Augustine Medal of Service by the Diocese of Bridgeport in recognition of her outstanding volunteer service at Saint Catherine Academy. The award, presented annually by Bishop Frank Caggiano, celebrates individuals who generously give their time and talent in support of their parishes, schools, and diocesan ministries.

Eileen has been a dedicated volunteer at Saint Catherine Academy, where she leads the physical education program. Her classes are a highlight of the week for students, offering opportunities for movement and teamwork. Whether organizing games or adapting activities for each student's needs, she brings energy and encouragement to every session.



“Eileen truly embodies the spirit of service this award represents,” said Lisa Lanni, Director of Education at Saint Catherine Academy. “She meets every student where they are and helps them achieve their best—always with a smile.” We are grateful for her service and celebrate this well-deserved recognition.



Join Us

Saint Catherine Center hosts
**Mass to Celebrate People
with Special Needs**
Monsignor Robert Weiss, Celebrant

Sunday, November 2, 2025

2 p.m.

Holy Cross Church
750 Tahmore Drive, Fairfield
Adjacent to Saint Catherine Center

All are welcome, but reservations are recommended.
Please RSVP to: ahite@stcatherineacademy.org



Follow us on Facebook!

[Saint Catherine Center](#)
[Saint Catherine Academy](#)

Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs | 760 Tahmore Drive | Fairfield, CT 06825 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!